

REMARKS

Entry of this Amendment and reconsideration are respectfully requested in view of the amendments to the claims and for the remarks herein.

Claim 1-16 are pending. Claims 1-3, 5-11 and 13-16 stand rejected. Claims 4 and 12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1 and 9 have been amended. Claims 4 and 12 have been cancelled.

In the Response to the prior Office Action, applicant provided evidence to sustain the claim of priority from that patent application filed in the Patent Office of the United Kingdom filed on November 4, 2000 and requested that the claim for priority be maintained.

The instant Office Action fails to state whether the claim for priority has been entered and maintained. Applicant respectfully requests that the examiner affirmatively acknowledge that the claim of priority has been entered.

The drawings are objected to for containing no labels for each block in the figures.

Applicant thanks the examiner for his observation and has submitted herewith, in Appendix A, a properly annotated, in red ink, a replacement sheet containing Figures 1-3, which includes labels for the boxes shown therein. After a careful reading of the specification, it was revealed that blocks 18 and 19 of Figure 2 and block 24 of Figure 3 are not described to in the specification; hence, these blocks have been removed from the drawings.

Having provided properly annotated replacement sheets, applicant believes that the reason for the objection has been overcome. Applicant respectfully requests that the replacement sheet be entered and the objection withdrawn.

The specification is objected to for containing informalities and failing to contain section headings.

Applicant thanks the examiner for his observation, but continues to disagree with the reason for objecting to the specification. However, in the interest of advancing the prosecution of this matter the specification has been amended to include the suggested format headings.

Having amended the specification applicant believes that the reason for the objection has been overcome. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection.

Applicant thanks the examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in dependent claims 4 and 12 if written to in independent form including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims and, thus, has amended independent claims 1 and 9, from which claims 4 and 12, respectively depend to include subject matter recited in the respective dependent claims. Applicant believes that the claims as amended are in a form consistent with the examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

Claims 1 -3, 5, 9-11 and 13 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Yamauchi (EP0528530A1).

Applicant respectfully disagrees with, and explicitly traverses, the reason for rejecting the claims. However, in the interest of advancing the prosecution of this matter, independent claims 1 and 9 have been amended to contain the subject matter recited in claims 4 and 12, respectively, which have been indicated would be in an allowable form.

Applicant submits that the reason for the rejection has been overcome and respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

With regard to the remaining claims, these claims depend from claims 1 and 9, which as amended are believed to be allowable over the cited reference. Accordingly, these claims are also allowable over the cited reference by virtue of their dependence from an allowable base claim.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8-11, 13, 14 and 16 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Begin (US 6,532,419).

Applicant respectfully disagrees with, and explicitly traverses, the reason for rejecting the claims. However, for the same reason recited above with regard to the rejection of the claims being anticipated by Yamauchi, applicant submits that reason for the rejection has been overcome and respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

Claims 7 and 15 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamauchi in view of Krasner (USP no. 6,289,041).

Applicant respectfully disagrees with, and explicitly traverses, the reason for rejecting the claims. However, for the same reason recited above with regard to the rejection of the claims being anticipated by Yamauchi, applicant submits that reason for the rejection has been overcome. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

Having amended claims 1 and 9 to include the subject matter of claims 4 and 12, respectively, applicant submits that claims 1 and 9 reflect the examiner's indication of allowable subject matter with regard to claims 4 and 12. Accordingly, the amendments made to claims 1 and 9 should be entered as the amendments adopt the examiner's suggestion of allowable subject matter and raise no new issues. Only a cursory review by the examiner is thus necessary.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all the present claims are patentable in view of the cited references. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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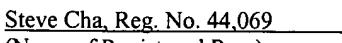
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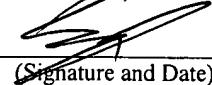
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